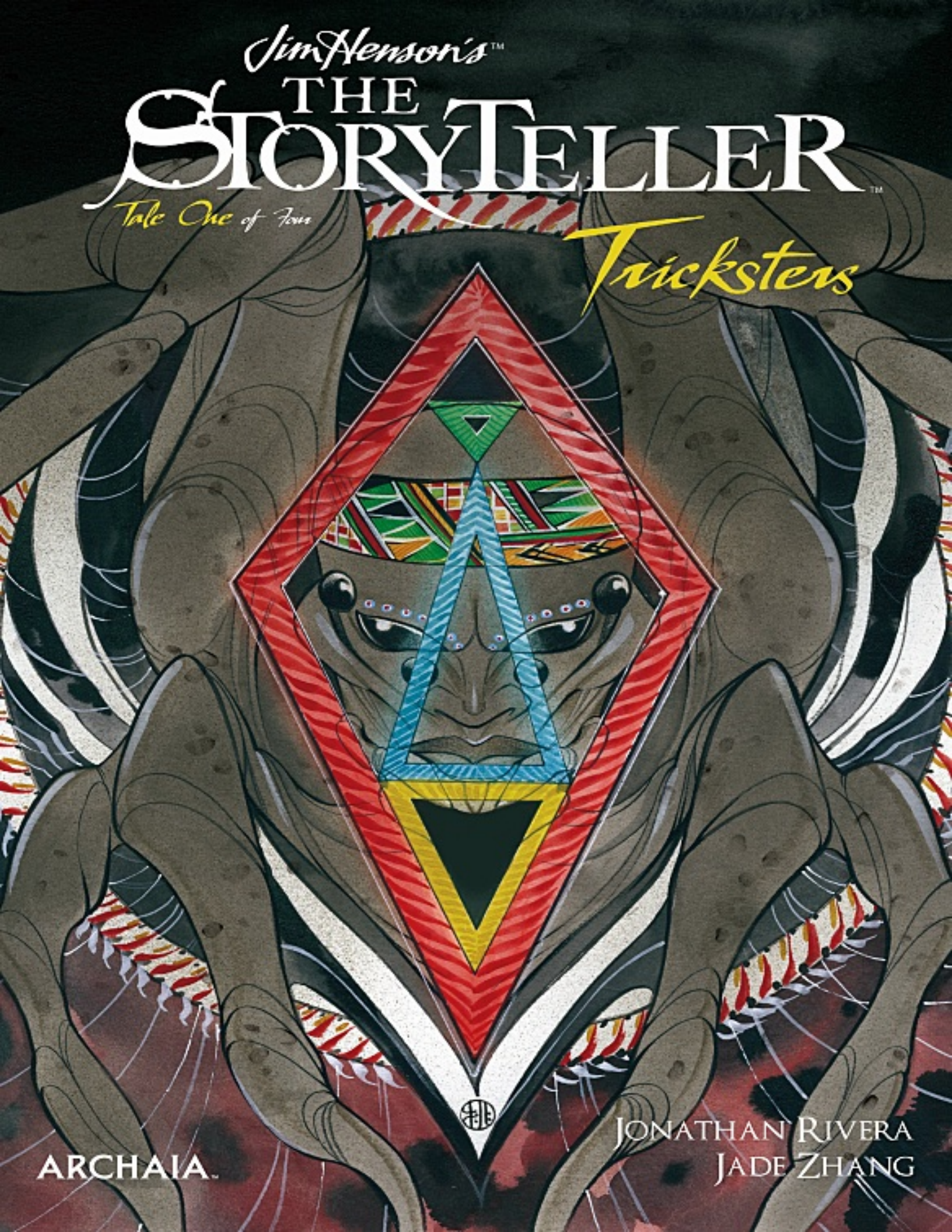
Jim Henson's™
THE STORYTELLER™
Tale One of Four
Tricksters
ARCHAIA™
JONATHAN RIVERA
JADE ZHANG

the SPINNER of STORIES

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THE STORYTELLER™
Tricksters

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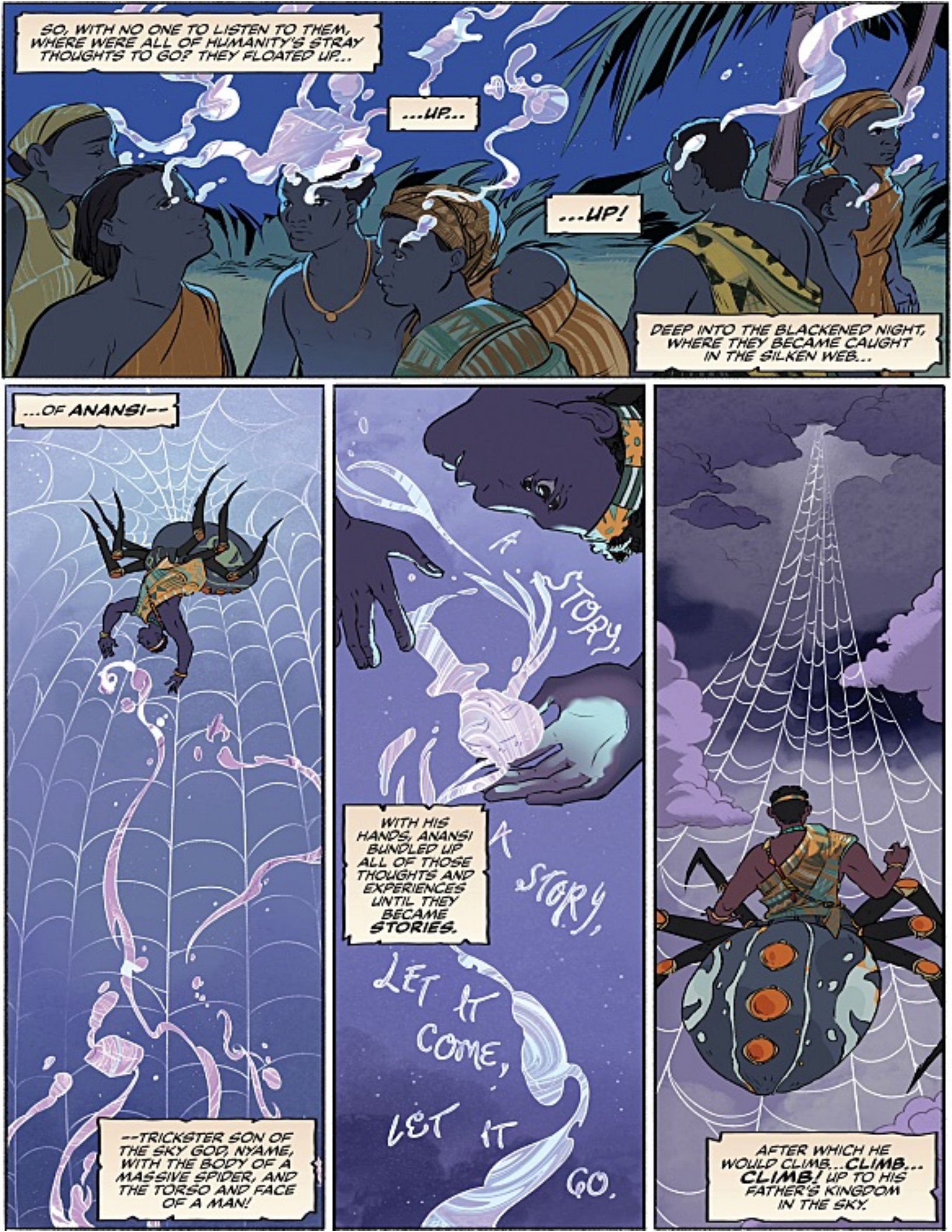
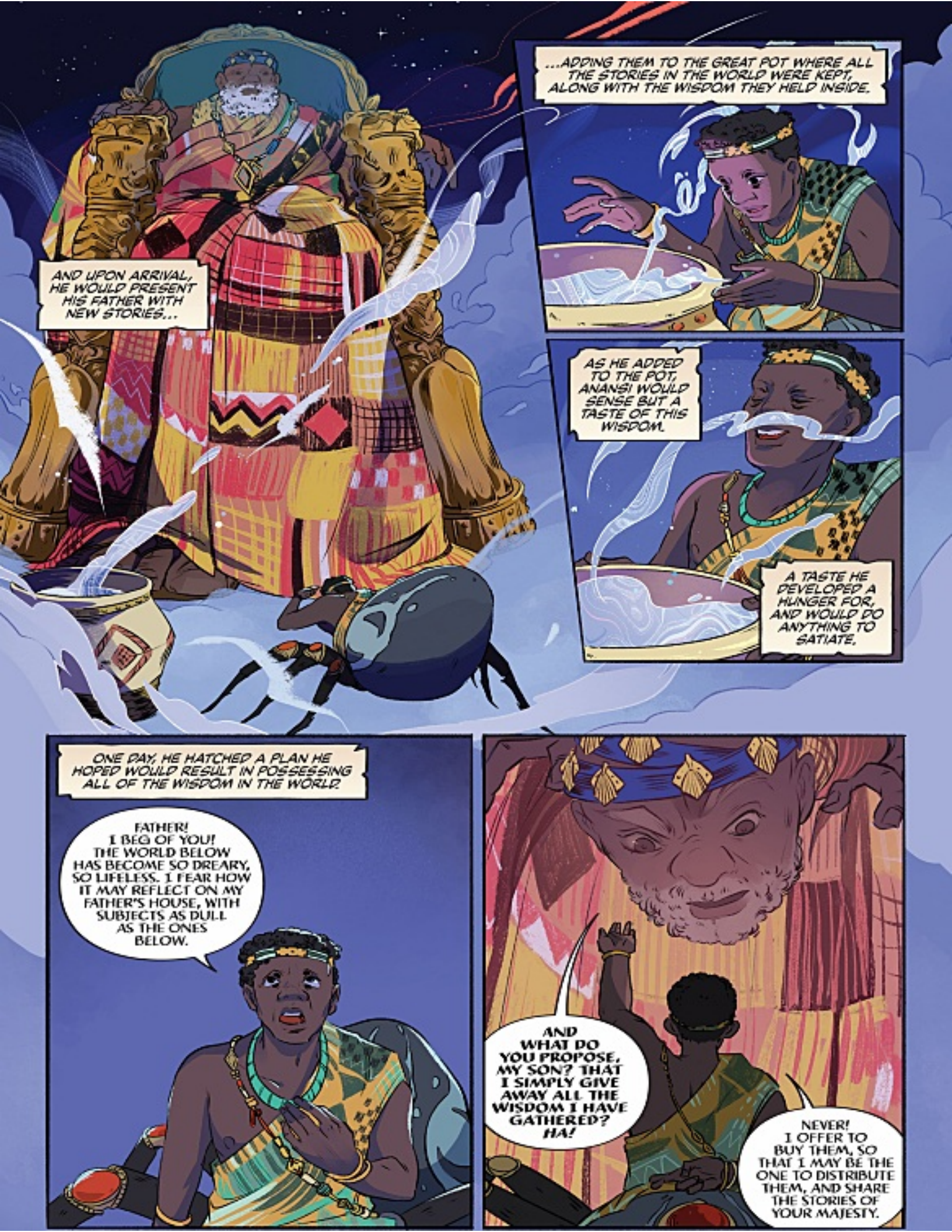
WOOF WOOF!
WOOF!
FEAR NOT, OLD BOY! I'M HERE!
WHERE'S THE TROUBLE?!
THERE! THERE!
A SPIDER!
FOR SHAME! THIS IS NO INTRUDER, MY FRIEND, BUT A WELCOMED GUEST.
YUCK! WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT ONE OF THOSE IN THEIR HOME?
FOR MANY, SPIDERS PROVIDE THE SERVICE OF CATCHING PESTS, BUT FOR A STORYTELLER SUCH AS MYSELF...WE OWE THEM OUR VERY EXISTENCE.

IN THE BEGINNING, HUMANKIND WAS BLAND AND FORMLESS, MOVING THROUGH THE WORLD WITH NO MORE DISTINCTION THAN LUMPS OF CLAY.
HOWEVER, THROUGH THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEY BEGAN TO MASTER THIS WORLD.
GIFTED WITH THE ABILITY TO LEARN...
...BUT BURDENED WITH A STUBBORNESS THAT SLOWED THE PASSING OF KNOWLEDGE.
THEY HOLD BETTER THIS WAY, SEE?
AWAY WITH YOU! PEST!
WHY WOULDN'T THEY JUST LISTEN TO EACH OTHER?
WELL, DO YOU LIKE BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO?
PAWS OFF THE TABLE, PLEASE.
WOOF!
NOW, WHERE WERE WE...

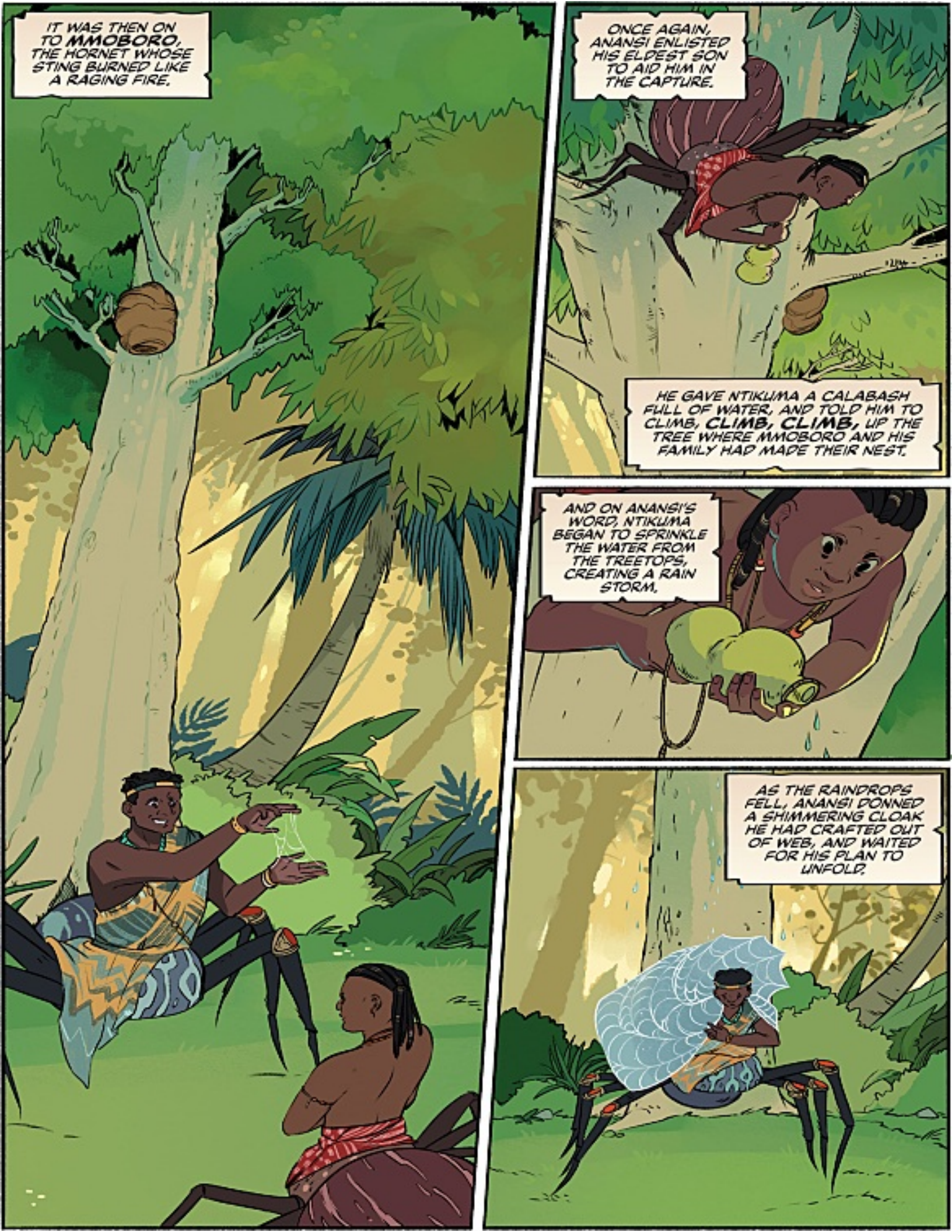

SO, WITH NO ONE TO LISTEN TO THEM, WHERE WERE ALL OF HUMANITY'S STRAY THOUGHTS TO GO? THEY FLOATED UP...
...UP...
...UP!
DEEP INTO THE BLACKENED NIGHT, WHERE THEY BECAME CAUGHT IN THE SILKEN WEB...
...OF ANANSI--
--TRICKSTER SON OF THE SKY GOD, NYAME, WITH THE BODY OF A MASSIVE SPIDER, AND THE TORSO AND FACE OF A MAN!
A STORY,
WITH HIS HANDS, ANANSI BUNDLED UP ALL OF THOSE THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES UNTIL THEY BECAME STORIES.
A STORY,
LET IT COME,
LET IT GO.
AFTER WHICH HE WOULD CLIMB...CLIMB... CLIMB! UP TO HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM IN THE SKY.


AND UPON ARRIVAL, HE WOULD PRESENT HIS FATHER WITH NEW STORIES...
...ADDING THEM TO THE GREAT POT WHERE ALL THE STORIES IN THE WORLD WERE KEPT, ALONG WITH THE WISDOM THEY HELD INSIDE.
AS HE ADDED TO THE POT, ANANSI WOULD SENSE BUT A TASTE OF THIS WISDOM.
A TASTE HE DEVELOPED A HUNGER FOR, AND WOULD DO ANYTHING TO SATIATE.
ONE DAY, HE HATCHED A PLAN HE HOPED WOULD RESULT IN POSSESSING ALL OF THE WISDOM IN THE WORLD.
FATHER! I BEG OF YOU! THE WORLD BELOW HAS BECOME SO DREARY, SO LIFELESS. I FEAR HOW IT MAY REFLECT ON MY FATHER'S HOUSE, WITH SUBJECTS AS DULL AS THE ONES BELOW.
AND WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE, MY SON? THAT I SIMPLY GIVE AWAY ALL THE WISDOM I HAVE GATHERED? HA!
NEVER! I OFFER TO BUY THEM, SO THAT I MAY BE THE ONE TO DISTRIBUTE THEM, AND SHARE THE STORIES OF YOUR MAJESTY.

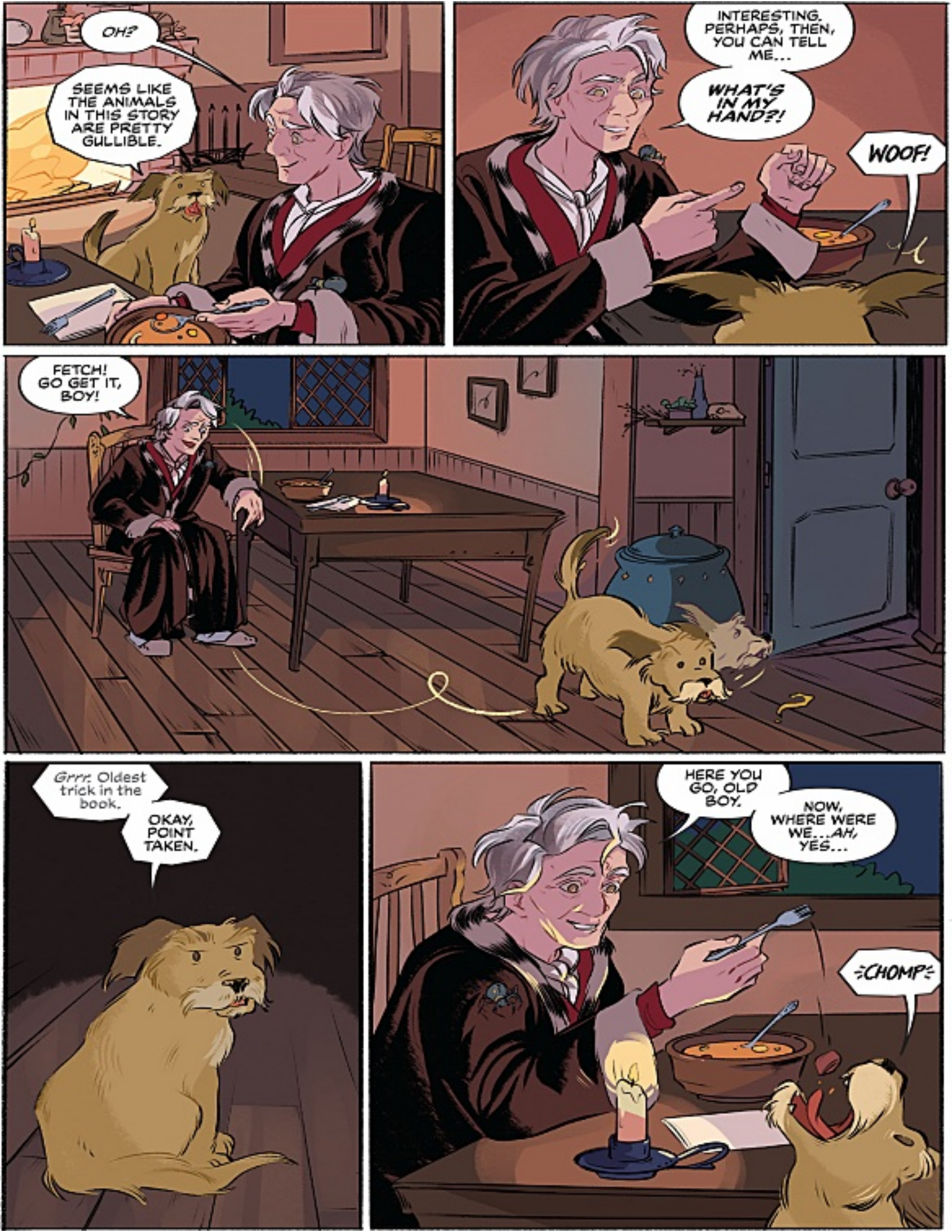
YOUR WORDS ARE SWEET AS HONEY, MY SON, BUT I HAVE BEEN OFFERED COUNTLESS TREASURES FROM THE LARGEST KINGDOMS IN OUR WORLD.
THERE IS NO AMOUNT OF JEWELS OR GOLD THAT WOULD MAKE ME PART WITH MY PRECIOUS STORIES.
FOOLISH ME, FATHER. I WISHED ONLY TO SPREAD YOUR GLORY. I WOULD GLADLY PAY ANY PRICE TO DO SO.
...
VERY WELL, THEN. IT WOULD BE CRUEL OF ME TO DENY MY SON THE CHANCE TO AID HIS FAMILY.
THREE TASKS SHALL I GIVE TO YOU--IMPOSSIBLE FEATS, WHICH WOULD PROVE YOUR WORTHINESS TO BECOME THE KEEPER OF OUR STORIES.
I TASK YOU WITH THE CAPTURE OF *ONINI* THE PYTHON, *MMOBORO* THE HORNET, AND A *MMOATIA* FAIRY OF THE FOREST.
DELIVER ALL THREE CREATURES TO ME, ANANSI, AND THE PRIZE SHALL BE YOURS.
OH, THANK YOU, FATHER! I SHALL NOT DISAPPOINT!

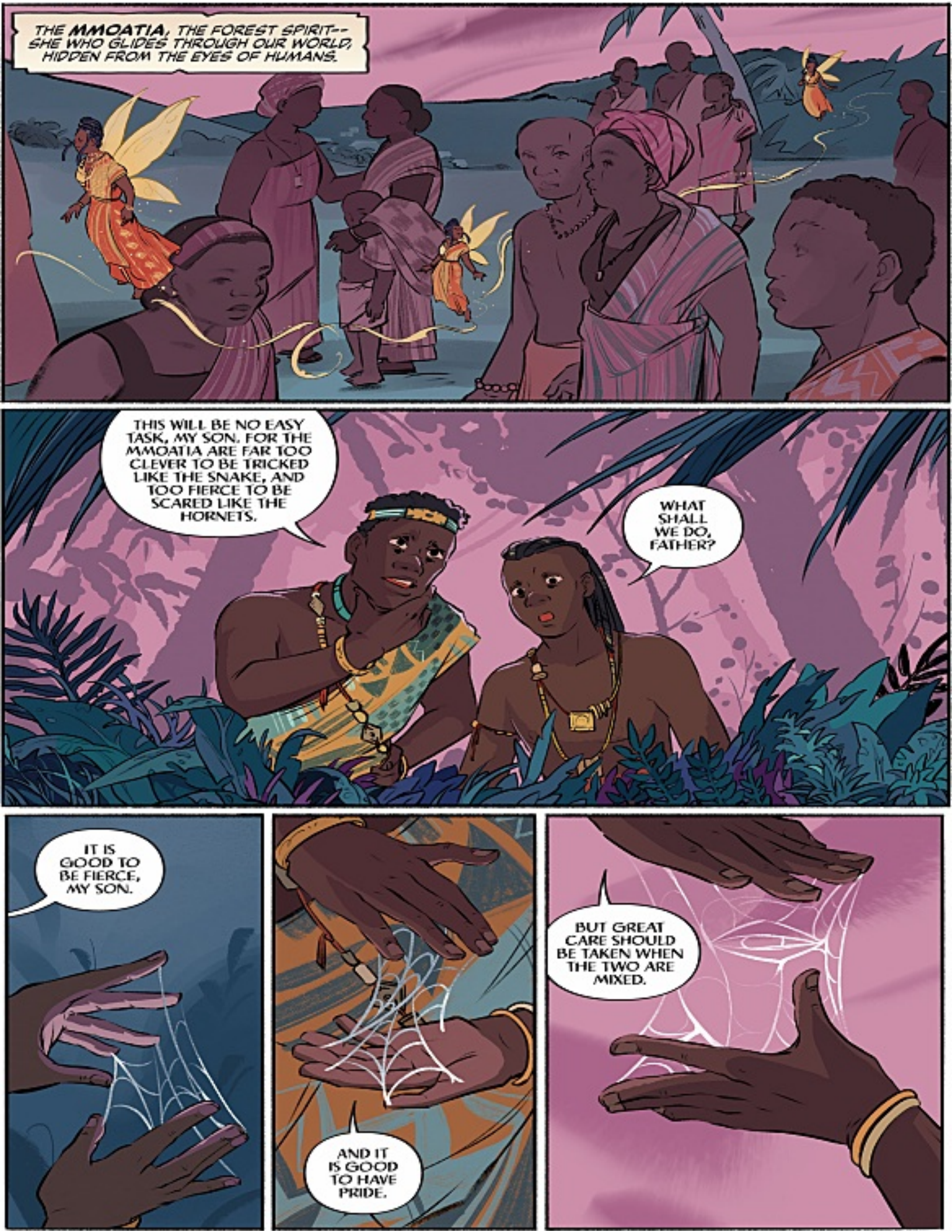
ANANSI'S FIRST TARGET WAS ONINI, THE GIANT PYTHON WHO STALKED THE JUNGLE.
BEING SO LARGE, ONINI WAS AFRAID OF NO ONE, AND WAS GOING ABOUT HIS BUSINESS WHEN HE HEARD SOMEONE MENTION HIS NAME.
WRONG! ONINI IS NO MERE GRASS SNAKE!
OH?!
ONINI FOUND ANANSI, WHO HAD EMPLOYED HIS ELDEST SON, NTIKUMA, TO AID HIM IN HIS QUEST.
PERHAPS-SSS I CAN BE OF ASSI-SSS-STANCE, MORSELS.
OH, MY! THE GREAT ONINI! I WAS JUST CORRECTING MY SON, WHO SAYS YOU ARE THE LENGTH OF A PALM TREE BRANCH.
AND OBVIOUSLY YOU ARE MUCH LARGER THAN THAT!
I AGREE. BUT THERE IS-SSS ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!
YOU HUMBLE US WITH YOUR COOPERATION, GREAT ONE!
AS I SAID, FATHER. THE MAGNIFICENT ONINI IS NEARLY AS LONG AS THIS BRANCH!
NEARLY?! I HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN TO STRETCH, YOUNG ONE!

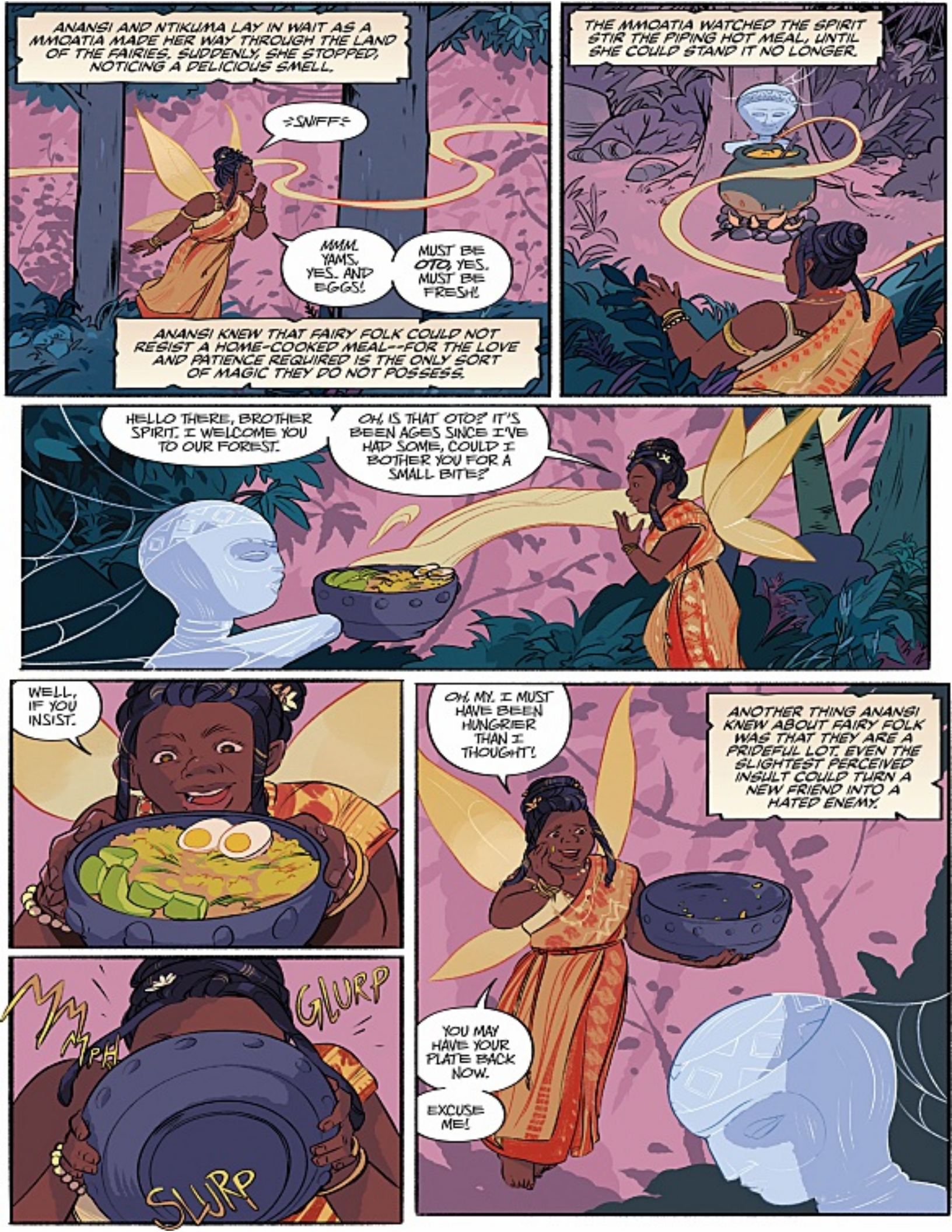
REALLY? THE BRANCH MUST BE LONGER ON YOUR SIDE.
COME SEE, FATHER!
NO! NO! NO! MY FOOLISH CHILD, COME TO THE OTHER SIDE AND SEE. HE IS MUCH LARGER THAN THIS PALTRY TWIG.
CLEARLY, AGE HAS AFFECTED YOUR SIGHT, FATHER. FROM THE OTHER SIDE, YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE THAT HE IS NO LONGER THAN THE TOP OF THE BRANCH!
YOU MUST BE BLIND!
CAN'T YOU SEE, PLAIN AS DAY?!
SO HOP, HOP, HOP, THEY WENT! BACK AND FORTH, PRETENDING TO ARGUE THE ENTIRE TIME.
ACK--NO! HELP ME! CUT ME LOO-SSSE!
WE MAY NOT AGREE ON HIS SIZE, MY SON, BUT WE CAN AGREE THAT HE WILL MAKE A FINE GIFT FOR GRANDFATHER!


IT WAS THEN ON TO MMOBORO, THE HORNET WHOSE STING BURNED LIKE A RAGING FIRE.
ONCE AGAIN, ANANSI ENLISTED HIS ELDEST SON TO AID HIM IN THE CAPTURE.
HE GAVE NTIKUMA A CALABASH FULL OF WATER, AND TOLD HIM TO CLIMB, CLIMB, CLIMB, UP THE TREE WHERE MMOBORO AND HIS FAMILY HAD MADE THEIR NEST.
AND ON ANANSI'S WORD, NTIKUMA BEGAN TO SPRINKLE THE WATER FROM THE TREETOPS, CREATING A RAIN STORM.
AS THE RAINDROPS FELL, ANANSI DONNED A SHIMMERING CLOAK HE HAD CRAFTED OUT OF WEB, AND WAITED FOR HIS PLAN TO UNFOLD.

WHO DARES ATTACK US?! WHO BEGS FOR THE FIERY STING OF MMOBORO?!
JUST A FRIENDLY TRAVELER, CAUGHT IN A SUDDEN STORM!
GAH!
QUICKLY, BROTHERS! HIDE UNDER MY CLOAK BEFORE YOU ARE OVER-WHELMED BY THE RAIN!
AS THE HORNETS DREW CLOSER, ANANSI QUICKLY SWUNG HIS CLOAK, AND CAUGHT THEM ALL IN AN INESCAPABLE WEB.
AND THAT IS HOW THE REIGN OF MMOBORO THE HORNET CAME TO AN END
I DON'T KNOW, THAT SEEMS A LITTLE FISHY TO ME!

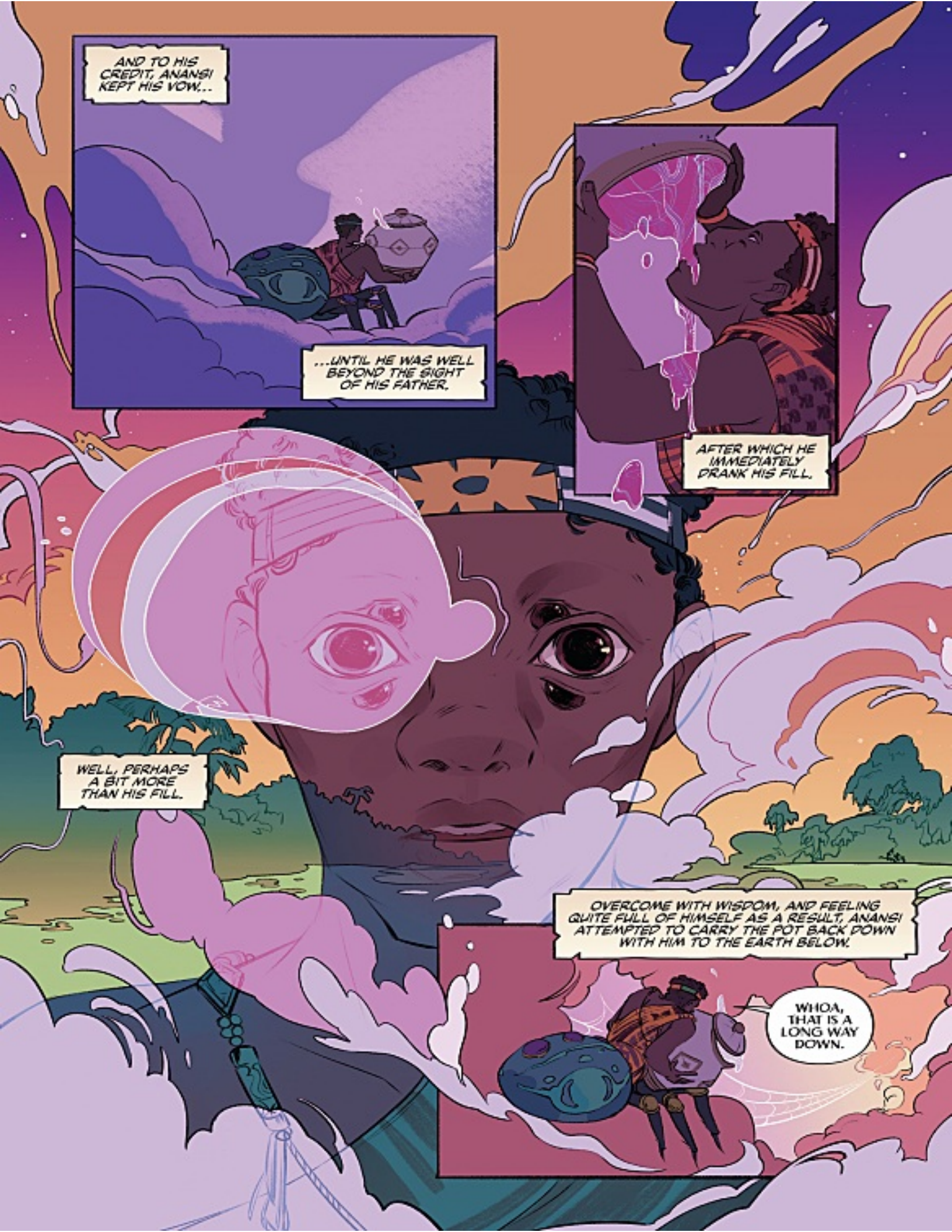

OH?
SEEMS LIKE THE ANIMALS IN THIS STORY ARE PRETTY GULLIBLE.
INTERESTING. PERHAPS, THEN, YOU CAN TELL ME...
WHAT'S IN MY HAND?!
WOOF!
FETCH! GO GET IT, BOY!
Grrr. Oldest trick in the book.
OKAY, POINT TAKEN.
HERE YOU GO, OLD BOY.
NOW, WHERE WERE WE...AH, YES...
CHOMP

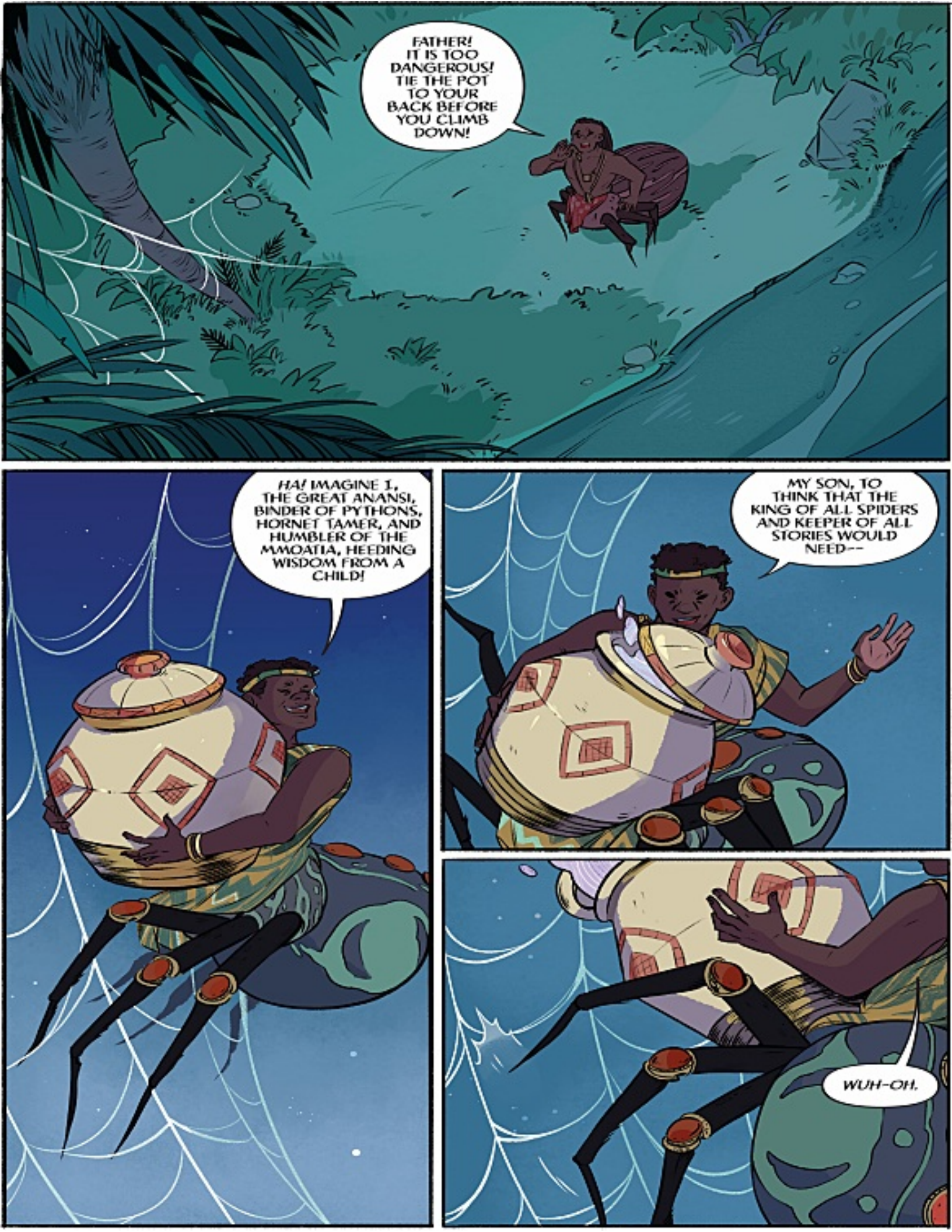

THE MMOATIA, THE FOREST SPIRIT-- SHE WHO GLIDES THROUGH OUR WORLD, HIDDEN FROM THE EYES OF HUMANS.
THIS WILL BE NO EASY TASK, MY SON. FOR THE MMOATIA ARE FAR TOO CLEVER TO BE TRICKED LIKE THE SNAKE, AND TOO FIERCE TO BE SCARED LIKE THE HORNETS.
WHAT SHALL WE DO, FATHER?
IT IS GOOD TO BE FIERCE, MY SON.
AND IT IS GOOD TO HAVE PRIDE.
BUT GREAT CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN THE TWO ARE MIXED.

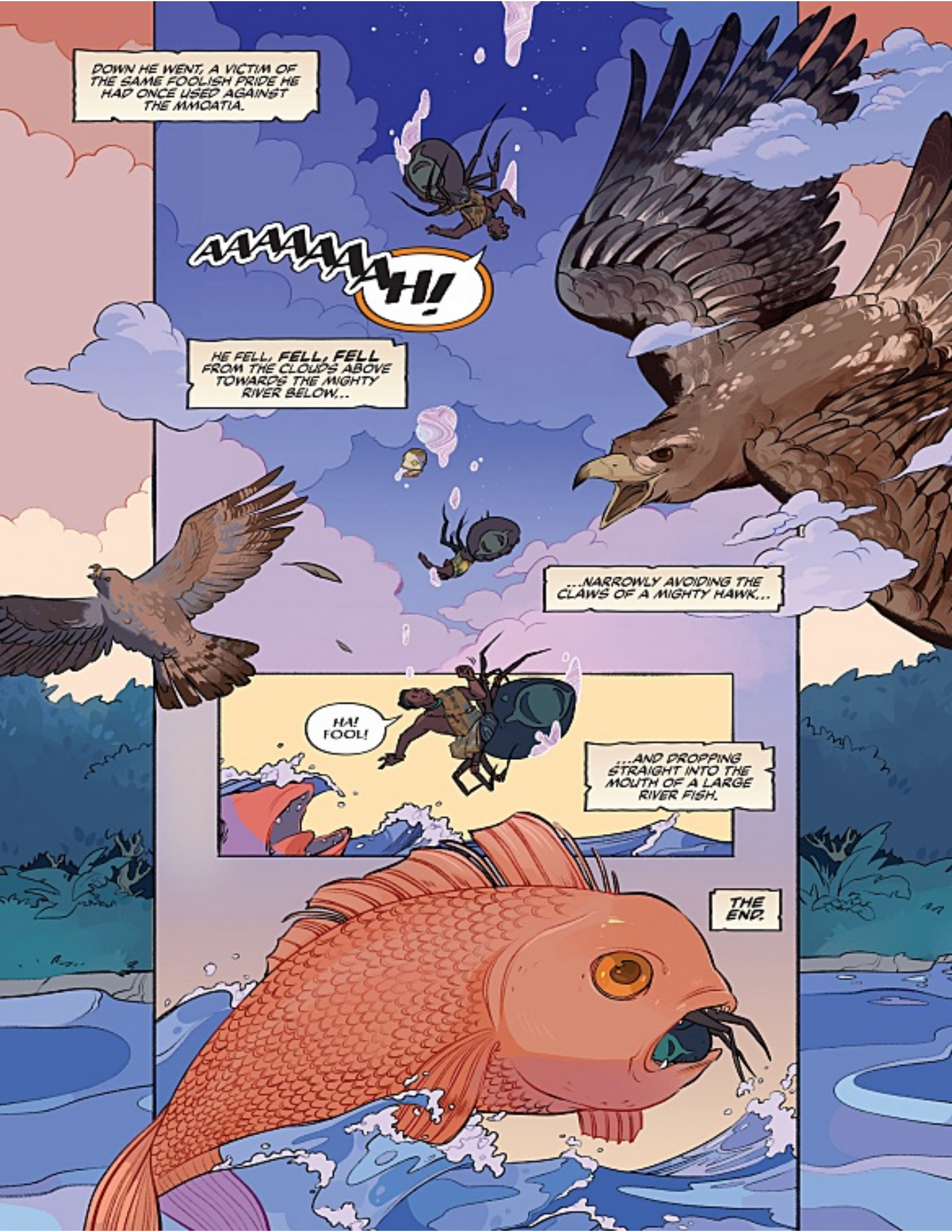

ANANSI AND NTIKUMA LAY IN WAIT AS A MMOATIA MADE HER WAY THROUGH THE LAND OF THE FAIRIES. SUDDENLY, SHE STOPPED, NOTICING A DELICIOUS SMELL.
=SNIFF=
MMM. YAMS. YES. AND EGGS!
MUST BE OTO, YES. MUST BE FRESH!
ANANSI KNEW THAT FAIRY FOLK COULD NOT RESIST A HOME-COOKED MEAL--FOR THE LOVE AND PATIENCE REQUIRED IS THE ONLY SORT OF MAGIC THEY DO NOT POSSESS.
THE MMOATIA WATCHED THE SPIRIT STIR THE PIPING HOT MEAL, UNTIL SHE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER.
HELLO THERE, BROTHER SPIRIT. I WELCOME YOU TO OUR FOREST.
OH, IS THAT OTO? IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I'VE HAD SOME, COULD I BOTHER YOU FOR A SMALL BITE?
WELL, IF YOU INSIST.
MPH
GLURP
SLURP
OH, MY. I MUST HAVE BEEN HUNGRIER THAN I THOUGHT!
ANOTHER THING ANANSI KNEW ABOUT FAIRY FOLK WAS THAT THEY ARE A PRIDEFUL LOT. EVEN THE SLIGHTEST PERCEIVED INSULT COULD TURN A NEW FRIEND INTO A HATED ENEMY.
YOU MAY HAVE YOUR PLATE BACK NOW.
EXCUSE ME!

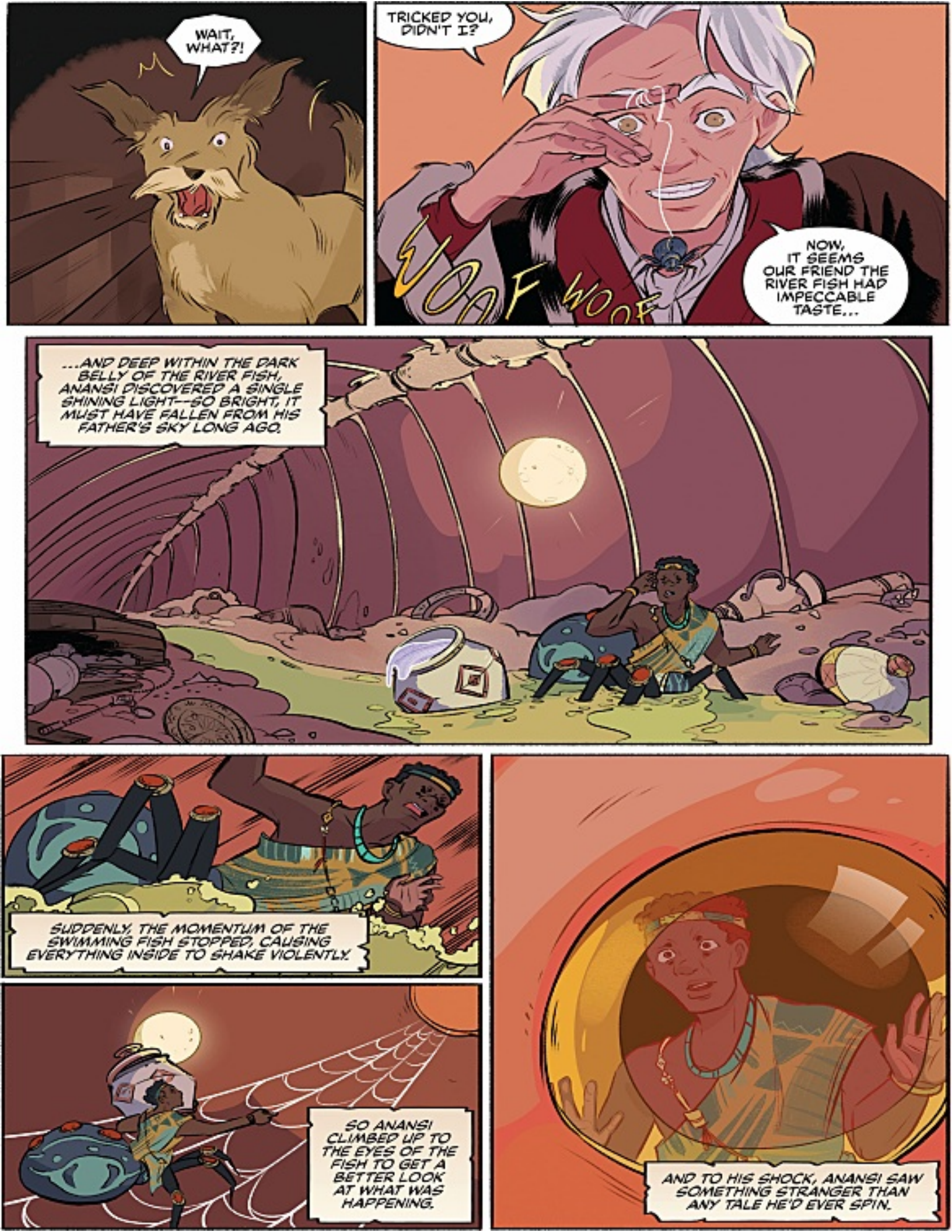
YOU MUST BE NEW TO THIS FOREST, STRANGER! HERE WE HAVE MANNERS.
HERE WE DO NOT SIMPLY IGNORE THE MMOATIA, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN SO GRACIOUS!
ARE YOU ASLEEP? AM I BORING YOU?!
WAKE UP!
WHAT?!
THE NERVE! UNHAND ME!
THE MORE THE MMOATIA STRUGGLED, THE MORE SHE BECAME BOUND--WRAPPING HERSELF UP IN A NEAT LITTLE BUNDLE, READY TO BE BROUGHT TO NYAME.

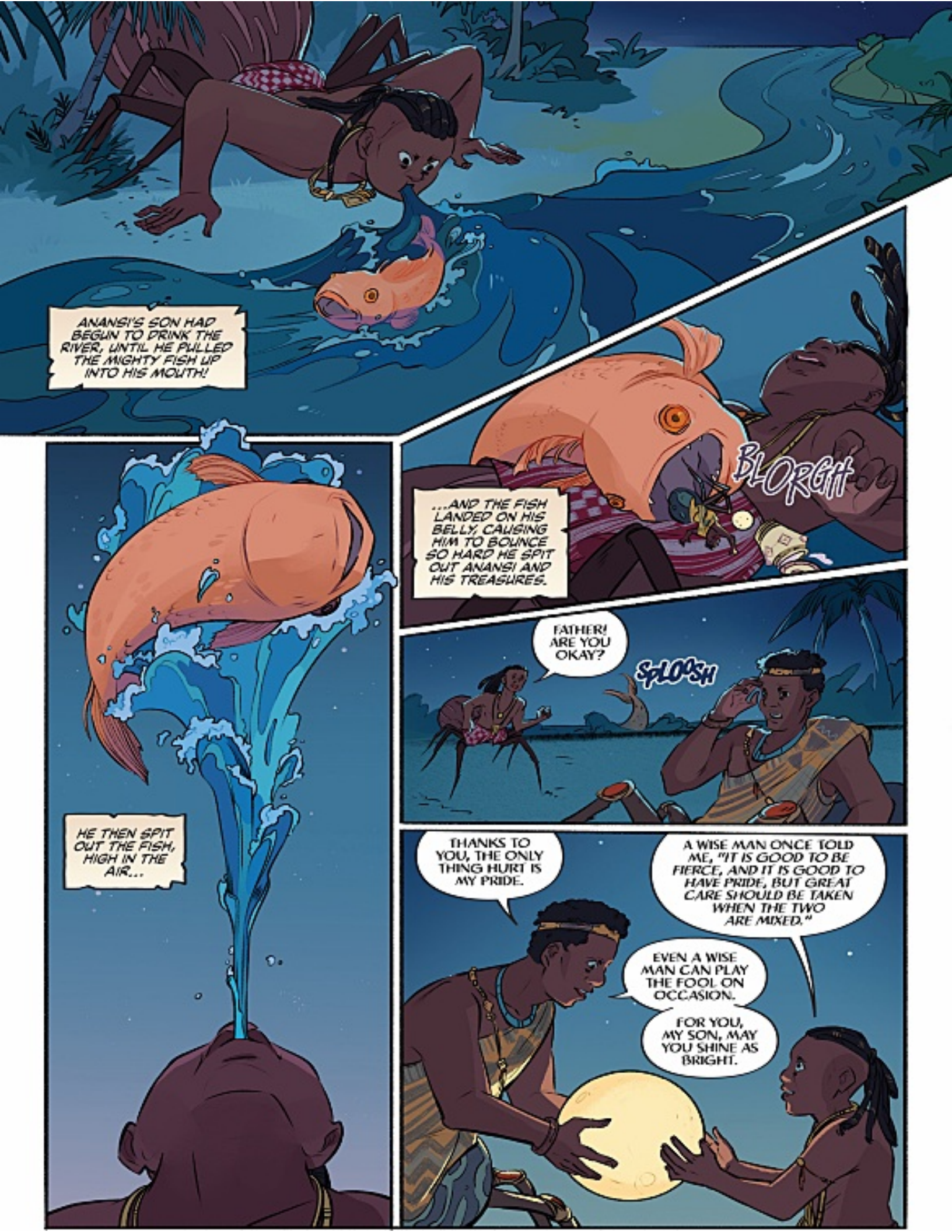
UP...UP...UP CLIMBED ANANSI, BACK TO HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM, WHERE HE PRESENTED HIS OFFERINGS TO NYAME.
FATHER, I GIVE TO YOU THE GREAT ONINI, MMOBORO, AND THE MMOATIA!
WITH YOUR CUNNING, WIT, AND SKILL, YOU HAVE FOUND SUCCESS IN THE MOST CHALLENGING OF TASKS.
YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELF WORTHY TO DISPENSE THIS WISDOM AS YOU SEE FIT.
THANK YOU, FATHER. I SHALL NOT FAIL YOU.

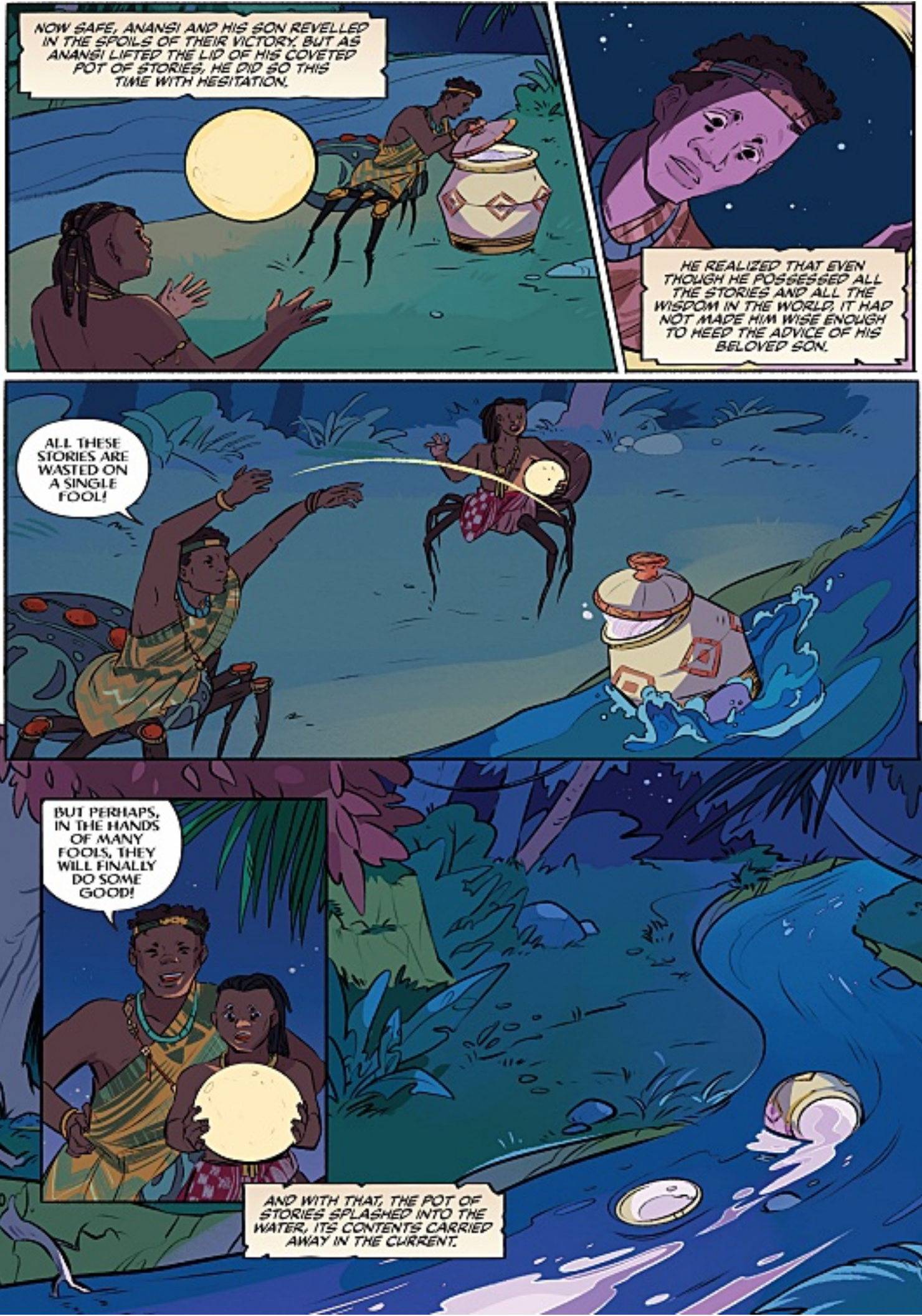

AND TO HIS CREDIT, ANANSI KEPT HIS VOW...
...UNTIL HE WAS WELL BEYOND THE SIGHT OF HIS FATHER.
AFTER WHICH HE IMMEDIATELY DRANK HIS FILL.
WELL, PERHAPS A BIT MORE THAN HIS FILL.
OVERCOME WITH WISDOM, AND FEELING QUITE FULL OF HIMSELF AS A RESULT, ANANSI ATTEMPTED TO CARRY THE POT BACK DOWN WITH HIM TO THE EARTH BELOW.
WHOA, THAT IS A LONG WAY DOWN.

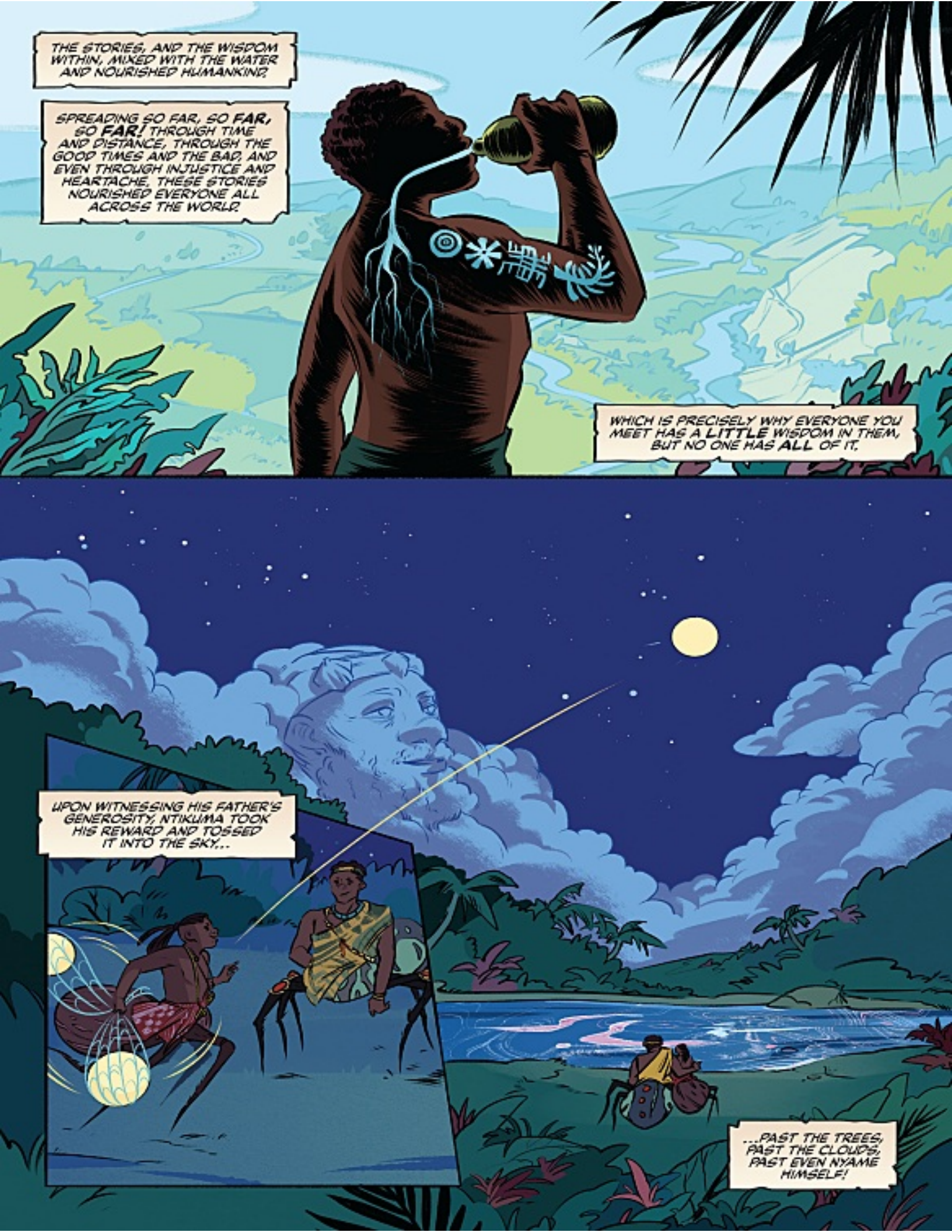

FATHER! IT IS TOO DANGEROUS! TIE THE POT TO YOUR BACK BEFORE YOU CLIMB DOWN!
HA! IMAGINE I, THE GREAT ANANSI, BINDER OF PYTHONS, HORNET TAMER, AND HUMBLER OF THE MMOATIA, HEEDING WISDOM FROM A CHILD!
MY SON, TO THINK THAT THE KING OF ALL SPIDERS AND KEEPER OF ALL STORIES WOULD NEED--
WUH-OH.


DOWN HE WENT, A VICTIM OF THE SAME FOOLISH PRIDE HE HAD ONCE USED AGAINST THE MMOATIA.
AAAAAAAH!
HE FELL, FELL, FELL FROM THE CLOUDS ABOVE TOWARDS THE MIGHTY RIVER BELOW...
...NARROWLY AVOIDING THE CLAWS OF A MIGHTY HAWK...
HA! FOOL!
...AND DROPPING STRAIGHT INTO THE MOUTH OF A LARGE RIVER FISH.
THE END.


WAIT, WHAT?!
TRICKED YOU, DIDN'T I?
WOOF WOOF
NOW, IT SEEMS OUR FRIEND THE RIVER FISH HAD IMPECCABLE TASTE...
...AND DEEP WITHIN THE DARK BELLY OF THE RIVER FISH, ANANSI DISCOVERED A SINGLE SHINING LIGHT--SO BRIGHT, IT MUST HAVE FALLEN FROM HIS FATHER'S SKY LONG AGO.
SUDDENLY, THE MOMENTUM OF THE SWIMMING FISH STOPPED, CAUSING EVERYTHING INSIDE TO SHAKE VIOLENTLY.
SO ANANSI CLIMBED UP TO THE EYES OF THE FISH TO GET A BETTER LOOK AT WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
AND TO HIS SHOCK, ANANSI SAW SOMETHING STRANGER THAN ANY TALE HE'D EVER SPIN.


ANANSI'S SON HAD BEGUN TO DRINK THE RIVER, UNTIL HE PULLED THE MIGHTY FISH UP INTO HIS MOUTH!
...AND THE FISH LANDED ON HIS BELLY, CAUSING HIM TO BOUNCE SO HARD HE SPIT OUT ANANSI AND HIS TREASURES.
BLORGH
HE THEN SPIT OUT THE FISH, HIGH IN THE AIR...
FATHER! ARE YOU OKAY?
SPLOOSH
THANKS TO YOU, THE ONLY THING HURT IS MY PRIDE.
A WISE MAN ONCE TOLD ME, "IT IS GOOD TO BE FIERCE, AND IT IS GOOD TO HAVE PRIDE, BUT GREAT CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN THE TWO ARE MIXED."
EVEN A WISE MAN CAN PLAY THE FOOL ON OCCASION.
FOR YOU, MY SON, MAY YOU SHINE AS BRIGHT.


NOW SAFE, ANANSI AND HIS SON REVELLED IN THE SPOILS OF THEIR VICTORY. BUT AS ANANSI LIFTED THE LID OF HIS COVETED POT OF STORIES, HE DID SO THIS TIME WITH HESITATION.
HE REALIZED THAT EVEN THOUGH HE POSSESSED ALL THE STORIES AND ALL THE WISDOM IN THE WORLD, IT HAD NOT MADE HIM WISE ENOUGH TO HEED THE ADVICE OF HIS BELOVED SON.
ALL THESE STORIES ARE WASTED ON A SINGLE FOOL!
BUT PERHAPS, IN THE HANDS OF MANY FOOLS, THEY WILL FINALLY DO SOME GOOD!
AND WITH THAT, THE POT OF STORIES SPLASHED INTO THE WATER, ITS CONTENTS CARRIED AWAY IN THE CURRENT.


THE STORIES, AND THE WISDOM WITHIN, MIXED WITH THE WATER AND NOURISHED HUMANKIND.
SPREADING SO FAR, SO **FAR**, SO **FAR!** THROUGH TIME AND DISTANCE, THROUGH THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD, AND EVEN THROUGH INJUSTICE AND HEARTACHE, THESE STORIES NOURISHED EVERYONE ALL ACROSS THE WORLD.
WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY EVERYONE YOU MEET HAS A **LITTLE** WISDOM IN THEM, BUT NO ONE HAS **ALL** OF IT.
UPON WITNESSING HIS FATHER'S GENEROSITY, NTIKUMA TOOK HIS REWARD AND TOSSED IT INTO THE SKY...
...PAST THE TREES, PAST THE CLOUDS, PAST EVEN NYAME HIMSELF!

...SO THAT IT MAY SHINE ON THOSE WHO PASS THE STORIES, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, FOREVER.
"THIS IS MY STORY, WHICH I HAVE RELATED. IF IT BE SWEET, OR IF IT BE NOT SWEET, TAKE SOME ELSEWHERE...
"AND LET SOME COME BACK TO ME."
WHERE IS HE NOW? ANANSI?
HARD TO TELL. HE'S A TRICKY FELLOW. BUT SOME SAY HE'S OUT THERE WEAVING A WEB SO LARGE IT WILL COVER THE WORLD!
BINDING US ALL TOGETHER, SO THAT EVERY STORY CAN BE HEARD.
UNTIL TOMORROW, OLD FRIEND, GOODNIGHT.
THE END.

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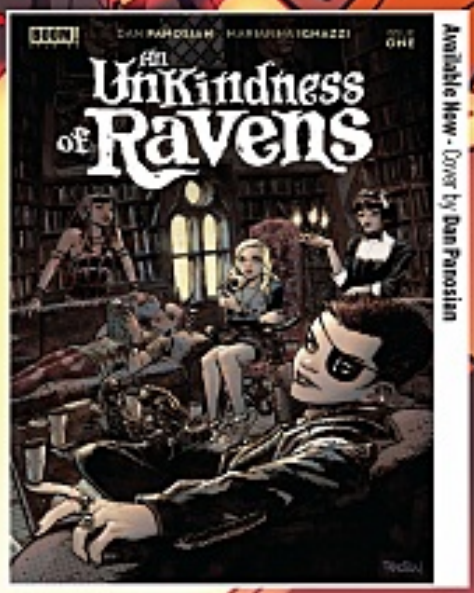

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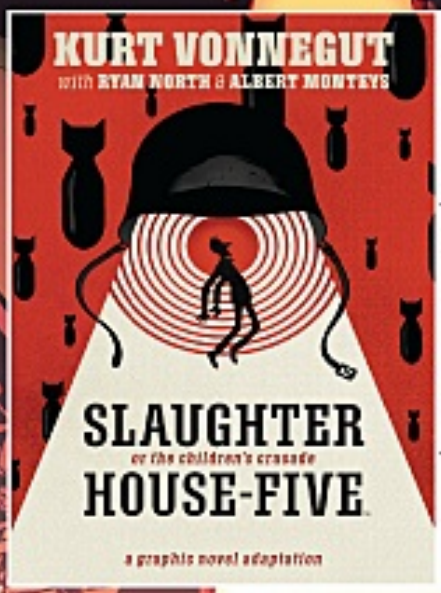

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